

RESTORING HISTORY

There's more to the Restoration Division than the name implies. In addition to restoring aircraft, the staff maintains over 300 aircraft and missiles on display in the museum's galleries and is responsible for moving and relocating current indoor and outdoor aircraft displays. Staff and volunteers reply to hundreds of inquiries from outside agencies and museums about aircraft components, lending their expertise and knowledge. They also must travel to various locations across the United States to transport collections. The division maintains the inventory of the numerous aircraft and missiles in storage.

Restoration crews work hand-in-hand with the Exhibits Division, Archives Division and Museum management on ever-changing gallery displays. With static displays moving toward compelling, realistic habitats, the positioning of the museum's historic aircraft collection plays a major role in conveying the story of military aviation. While moving, suspending or adjusting the pitch of any aircraft may appear as a moderate task on the surface, it requires extensive planning and involves much manpower to achieve.

The crew is well versed in a variety of skills ranging from machine and woodworking expertise to precision craftsmanship in sheet metal and painting. Their knowledge of aircraft spans years of technology -- from World War I aircraft to the elite fighters of today's Air Force.

The Restoration Division relies heavily on a dedicated, talented cadre of volunteers in accomplishing its mission. More than 60 volunteers help the division prepare aircraft for display and contribute to preserving the Museum's status as a world-class institution.

Visitors are invited to take a "Behind the Scenes Tour" of the Restoration and Exhibits Divisions. These free tours are offered one Friday a month throughout the year and every Friday June through August with pre-registration required. Visitors going on the tour must be at least 12 years of age. For more information, call (937) 255-3286.